

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 EUR-12 SY-05 CPR-01 SCS-06 CA-01

OC-06 CCO-00 PER-01 OPR-02 SSO-00 /116 W

-----074565 272034Z /53

P R 271248Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO AMEMBASSYPRETORIA PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2098

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DARESSALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1193

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, BC

SUBJECT: ROADBLOCKS ESTABLISHED AROUND GABORONE

REF: (A) GABORONE 1004, (B) GABORONE 0939

1. BOTSWANA POLICE AND BDF HAVE ESTABLISHED ROADBLOCKS ON ALL APPROACHES TO GABORONE AND ARE CONDUCTING DETAILED SEARCHES OF ALL TRAVELLERS. ACCORDING TO GOB SECRETARY TO CABINET STEENKAMP, ROADBLOCKS HAVE BEEN SET UP BECAUSE BOTH PRESIDENT KHAMA AND STEENKAMP HAVE RECEIVED THREATS AGAINST THEIR LIVES. THREATS, PRESUMABLY FROM SOUTH AFRICA (BUT NOT FROM SAG), HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN PROVOKED BY GOB HANDLING OF RECENT INCIDENT IN WHICH TWO SOUTH AFRICANS AND ONE UK CITIZEN WERE KILLED WHILE IN BDF CUSTODY (REFTELS).

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2. WE HAVE HAD A NUMBER OF REPORTS FROM TRAVELLERS THAT INSPECTIONS ARE EXTREMELY THOROUGH, TO INCLUDE OPENING OF SUITCASES AND LADIES' HANDBAGS. MOST PERSONS WHO HAVE GONE THROUGH ROADBLOCKS HAVE REPORTED THAT BDF PERSONNEL WERE POLITE BUT INSISTED ON A THOROUGH SEARCH. HOWEVER, IN ONE INSTANCE, A TRAVELLER TOLD US THAT BDF SOLDIER AT ROADBLOCK WAS BELLIGERENT AND HAD BEEN DRINKING. BDF

PERSONNEL MANNING ROADBLOCKS ARE ARMED.

3. EXISTENCE OF ROADBLOCKS POSES PROBLEM FOR OFFICIAL TRAVELERS WHO MAY BE DRIVING FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO GABORONE CARRYING CLASSIFIED OR SENSITIVE INFORMATION OR EQUIPMENT. SUCH TRAVELLERS ARE NOT ACCREDITED AS DIPLOMATS IN BOTSWANA AND DO NOT ENJOY VIENNA CONVENTION IMMUNITIES FROM SEARCHES AT ROADBLOCKS. THEREFORE, POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT CLASSIFIED OR SENSITIVE MATERIAL COULD BE COMPROMISED DURING SEARCHES.

4. IN A EFFORT TO RESOLVE PROBLEM, EMBOFF CONTACTED ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY TO PRESIDENT KHAMA, CHARLES TIBONE, APRIL 25. TIBONE SAID THAT GOB IS NOT ABLE TO GIVE BLANKET EXEMPTION FROM SEARCHES TO DIPLOMATS NOT ACCREDITED IN BOTSWANA. HOWEVER, HE AGREED TO ARRANGE FOR EXCEPTIONS ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS UPON NOTIFICATION FROM EMBASSY OF NAME, ITINERARY AND (IF POSSIBLE) AUTOMOBILE LICENSE NUMBER OF OFFICIAL TRAVELLER. DESPITE TIBONE'S WILLINGNESS TO BE HELPFUL, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT SEARCHES OF DIPLOMATS NOT ACCREDITED TO BOTSWANA (AND THEIR BAGGAGE) WILL NOT OCCUR.

5. IN VIEW OF ABOVE, WE BELIEVE THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE SECURITY OF CLASSIFIED OR SENSITIVE MATERIAL IS FOR EMBASSY PERSONNEL TO MEET AND ESCORT TRAVELLERS CARRY-
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ING SUCH ITEMS. IN MOST CASES IT WILL BE ADVISABLE TO TRANSFER SENSITIVE MATERIAL TO CAR WITH BOTSWANA DIPLOMATIC PLATES, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER ENTRY TO BOTSWANA. SEARCHES ARE NOT BEING CARRIED OUT AT BORDER ENTRY POINTS BUT AT ROADBLOCKS ON ROADS FROM ENTRY POINTS (INCLUDING GABORONE AIRPORT) INTO CAPITAL.

6. IF THE ABOVE PROGRAM IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL, WE MUST BE INFORMED IN ADVANCE WHEN AND WHERE VISITORS CARRYING SENSITIVE INFORMATION OR MATERIAL WILL BE ARRIVING IN BOTSWANA. EMBASSY WILL MEET ALL SUCH ARRIVALS BUT WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING AT LEAST 24-HOUR NOTICE.

7. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ROADBLOCKS REPRESENT ANY PERSONAL DANGER TO AMERICANS TRAVELLING FOR BUSINESS OR PLEASURE IN BOTSWANA. NEEDLESS TO SAY, HOWEVER, ALL TRAVELLERS SHOULD POLITELY COMPLY WITH DIRECTIONS OF TROOPS MANNING CHECKPOINTS UNLESS COMPROMISE OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION WILL RESULT. IN SUCH A CASE, TRAVELLER SHOULD INSIST, IF AT ALL FEASIBLE, ON CONTACTING THE EMBASSY BEFORE SUBMITTING TO INSPECTION.

8. WE HAVE NO IDEAN HOW LONG ROADBLOCKS WILL BE MAIN-
TAINED.
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Message Attributes

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